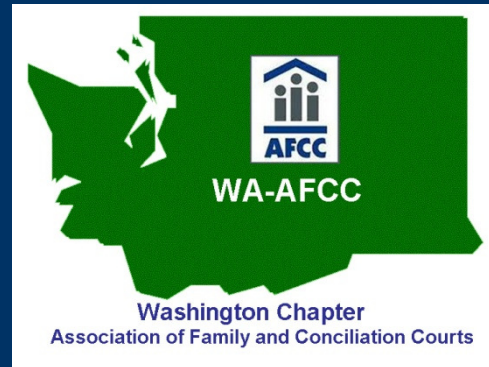


WA AFCC Washington Chapter

Association of
Family &
Conciliation
Courts Newsletter

**NW
Family
Ties**

June 2018
vol 5. no. 1
Newsletter
#10



**Link to Two Featured
Articles: Ask the
Experts**

**10 Things About Step Up
Planning**

**10 Things Judges Want in
Parenting Plans**

[President's Message](#)



Dennis 'DC' Croninin, J.D.

The Washington Chapter
of AFCC has been

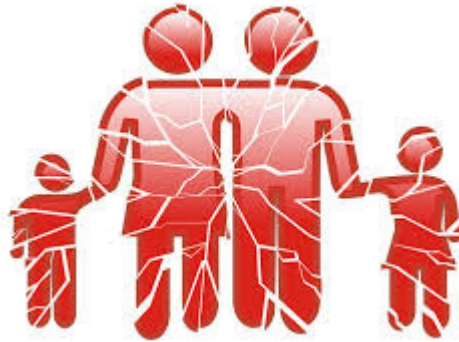
Greetings!

The Washington Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts will hold the 7th Annual Conference on Saturday, **September 22, 2018** at the Washington Athletic Club. The title for this conference is:

Fractured Families and Fresh Solutions

working to expand membership and involvement in diverse settings across the state. We begin a new phase in the development of our organization by virtue of my serving as the current President for 2018-2019 operating out of Spokane. There will be greater use of technology and cyber-communications methods along with additional efforts to increase sharing of ideas and methods of service for populations on both the east and west portions of our state. We began that process last year with some outreach seminars as Advanced Title 26 GAL training held in Spokane and Olympia. It is our hope to make other new connections and deepen our ties with those we already have across the state. We all share in the common purpose of improving our skills and knowledge for "Helping Families in Times of Crisis."

As my term begins, I am reminded of what a complex world we live in. Families and relationships are forever changing and evolving and legislative



The **6 hour** training event has been **approved by the WSBA for CLE** credit (activity 1069162) and there are approved credits for mental health and psychologists for CE units.

The morning plenary sessions include a presentation by Mindy Mitnick, M.Ed. on **Child Development for Family Law Professionals.**



This will be followed by **A View from the Bench**, a stimulating panel discussion and question-answer plenary moderated by Dr. Daniel Rybicki and Stacy Heard, J.D., with several judicial officers from King, Thurston, and Stevens Counties.

enactments affecting families seem ever increasing. With the recent enactment of Senate Bill 5598 concerning relative visitation, (effective June 07, 2018), boundaries seem to have once again expanded in Washington. Now, if a person is a child's relative, and has a substantial relationship with the child, the person may seek visitation with the child, if all statutory requirements can be met. This includes any blood relative, including those of the half-blood, and including first cousins, second cousins, nephews, nieces, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, and step-fathers, step-mothers, step-brothers and step-sisters as well. Of course, persons who meet the test for de facto parentage can also have child visitation as well.

Clearly, in this developing process, there is a role for WA AFCC and the interdisciplinary talents of AFCC members to assist safe and healthy relationships for children and guide the development and implementation of this new



The afternoon has eight break-out sessions (4 concurrent presentations each 90 minute block) which cover a large array of topics. These sessions are listed here:

- an advanced workshop on **Improving Your Interviewing Skills** (Mitnick and Rybicki),
- **Help for DV and Trauma Survivors in Family Court** (Hirsch and Garceau),
- **Parenting Plans for Special Needs Children** (Carson and Hunter),
- **Work Product Review of GAL and Parenting Evaluations** (Rybicki and Wieder),
- **How Trauma Influences Family Law Litigation** (Stahl and Wheeler)
- **Professional Risk Management in Dealing with Domestic Relations Cases** (Hunter and Poppleton)
- **Implications of Technology and Social Media for DV and Family Law Court Cases** (Pines, et al).
- More details about the specific content is available at the event page. You also **register now** for **Early Bird Savings**. Those amount to 10% over regular

law to avoid the implicit family conflict this new law appears founded upon.

One of our Board members, attorney Mark Baumann, has authored an excellent summary and discussion of this legislation. The full text of his analysis may be accessed using this link.

[Mark Baumann
Legislation Analysis
Link](#)

Finally, I would like to thank you for the honor of serving as your President during the 2018-2019 term. If you have any questions about membership or the organization, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dennis 'DC' Cronin, J.D.
President, WA-AFCC

registration fees. The Early Bird discount ends July 30th so act now. Use the Seventh Conference Information Link below for more details or to register now.



[Seventh Conference Information
Link](#)

or use the link to
[Go to WA AFCC website](#)

and

Mark Your Calendar

**Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018
Washington Athletic Club**



There will be a **membership meeting** and **lunch buffet** open to all those who attend and purchase a lunch ticket.

The Conference will be followed at the end of the day with a **Social Hour** where you can meet the speakers and

Quick Links

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BECOME A MEMBER
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WA AFCC
1001 Fourth Ave., 44th floor
Seattle, WA 98154

Phone:: 206-389-1623

Email: info@wa-afcc.net

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chat with colleagues. We are also
planning on a **Silent Auction** at this
event.



Self-Care for Family Law Professionals, A Personal Experience

It was quiet....I recently attended a
continuing education conference in
Clackamas, Oregon hosted by the
Oregon Psychological Association
(OPA). The theme of the conference
was on self-care and I expected
workshops on meditating, exercise and
so on.



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Daniel Rybicki, Psy.D.



**The Law Office of
Stacy D. Heard, PLLC**

Stacy Heard, J.D.

While our AFCC conferences have a certain high energy, extroversion, professional momentum and diverse discussions between attorneys and mental health professionals that I enjoy, this particular conference was quiet. There were indeed workshops on meditation, exercise, breathing and so on but also more focus on support, personal reflection, validation and renewal than I expected. The non-family law therapists and psychologists have a good grasp of these concepts-they have to. One psychologist told me she had been seeing some clients each week for over 20 years! Many of us in the field of family law, child custody evaluations and mediation only step in and step out of the families we work with but this work is mostly adversarial, highly complex, intense and involves analysis and review of many repetitive emotional trauma themes and their impact. How are we fostering our own self-care in all of this?

Here are a few things from the conference:

How do you take care of yourself?

This was presented as assessing what you need, what your underlying goals are in your work and home life and what actions you do to accomplish those goals. Writing these things down in a journal or calendar create action and accountability. It's important to schedule your work time and your non-work/off/fun time-this creates balance. Also, are you doing things grudgingly



Interested In Getting Involved and Lending a Helping Hand?



Your state chapter is a vibrant organization which relies on the guidance and input of an active Board of Directors and various committees. As a precursor to serving on the Board, members are expected to have been involved with WA AFCC for at least two years and preference is given for persons who have served on committees. In order to get involved in moving this organization to greater heights, you are encouraged to consider volunteering to work on one of the committees. In order to be considered for involvement in a committee, you should email the respective chairperson and share your interest and contact information. They will be happy to answer questions and see where

or willingly? If you find you are doing things grudgingly, these things will be harder to do.

How do you identify your strengths and vulnerabilities in your work identity?

The importance of consultation with others and reflective journal writing was discussed. It was pointed out that vacation, being in nature, exercise and escaping through a book or movie provides a necessary and earned break. It's also important to reflect on why you entered your chosen work field. Would you do anything else instead or change that? Most of us are challenged, inspired and committed to the work we do and that is why we continue to do it. What initially drew you to this work? Have you lost sight of that? How do you know when you are under stress? Can you identify that before your clients, family or friends? "When the well's dry, we know the worth of water." ~ Benjamin Franklin

What is the best part of your work day that you do for you?

Many conference attendees said going for a brief walk between clients, closing their eyes for 5 minutes, getting their email inbox down to 10 or less, bringing fresh flowers into their office or listening to music. People who work from home shared that they start their day by stepping outside their front door and closing it. Then they take a deep breath before going back inside to start their work day. At the end of the day, they go back out their front door

you might be able to participate. The current committee structure and email contacts for chairpersons is listed below.

Education Committee (includes Conference, Speakers Bureau) - Dr. Jennifer Wheeler (dr.wheeler@yahoo.com) and Hon. Tony Wartnik (theadjudicator@comcast.net) co-chairs

Professional Roles and Practice Standards (includes Quality Assurance, Ethics, Professional Outreach) - Melanie English, Ph.D., MSW (menglish@drmenglish.com) and Michele Unsworth, M.Ed. (mischa915@gmail.com) as co-chairs

Membership and Outreach (includes Public Relations, Social, Professional Partners) - John Kydd, J.D. (john@kyddlaw.com)

Technology and Media Task Force (website design, mgt.) - Dr. Daniel Rybicki (rybicki06@comcast.net)



and do the same thing before coming back in. Others said at the end of the day they light candles or put away their laptop to signify closure. Eating chocolate was also a common theme...

What do you need in your work/home life? Do you need to foster more creativity? Do you need to 'break-up' with your smart phone? Are you not saying no enough? Do you recognize hazards of poor diet, sleep and exercise? We know the benefits but can't or don't always make those things a priority. Can you recognize the impact of their absence? Can you identify your stressors and your rewards? How do manage these things if you don't recognize them? Knowing what to do isn't doing it. Everyone has degrees of stress in their home and work life-it's not what you hold in your hand but how you hold it that is critical.

Such important things to think about! While I missed all of you, I found this conference and these questions worthy and insightful. The quiet was good. Well done OPA!

Wishing everyone a restorative, balanced and fun summer-

Melanie English, PhD, MSW
AFCC Member and WA-AFCC Board
Member and Secretary

Eighth Annual Conference Set for Spring 2019

New Intensive Format Planned



Dr. Robert Simon



Dr. Benjamin Garber

The Conference will provide 6 hours of training as usual, but the format will include one hour plenary sessions with each speaker in the morning and then ***four hour intensive and in-depth workshops*** with either of the presenters. Those attending will have the benefit of the vast clinical and forensic experience of two of the foremost experts on parenting evaluations, alienation and visitation resistance, and other thorny issues in meeting the best interests of children

in family law matters. Be sure to mark your calendar for **Saturday, March 22, 2019** and watch for further details as this event will be one you don't want to miss.



Ask the Experts: Ten Things Things to Know About Step-Up Planning: When and How to Determine the Right Time.

Leslie Drozd, Ph.D., and Marsha Kline Pruett, Ph.D.D, ABPP

In the child custody field, we know that children do best when they have a relationship with parents that are reasonably able to take care of them and keep their interests in mind. We know that families change, developmentally and systemically, due to normative growth and unexpected events. We don't know how to come up with a parenting plan for 2 and 4-year old children that will for sure work ten years later. We can, though, come up with a framework to help us better know what we don't know. That framework is what we are calling a Step-Up Plan.



[Read More](#)



Ask the Experts: Ten Things Judges Appreciate in a Parenting Plan Evaluation

*by Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman,
Los Angeles Superior Court*



Hitting the Bull's Eye with Your Report

Child custody evaluations can be an invaluable tool for bench officers when they are timely, sufficiently comprehensive, and provide information and analysis that, when coupled with other evidence, assist the bench officer in making orders that serve the best interests of the children involved. To understand what sorts of things will be useful to a bench officer when doing a child custody evaluation, it is critical to understand the basis for being asked to do one in the first place.

[Read More](#)

Membership in WA AFCC and AFCC brings online access to the Family Court Review and 25+ years of back issues. Discounted rates for conference registration and reduced cost for publications. Join Today.

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